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Edward W. O'Brien

STATINTL

Soviet spying unmasked

WASHINGTON — It's not fashionable any longer to apply the term "Cold War" to the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

O'Brien

Semantics aside, the two super-powers are in fact in a great struggle for what each considers to be stakes of the highest value. Tangled though the Vietnam war issues are, one issue surely is the future role of Washington and Moscow in the future of Southeast Asia.

In other parts of the world, the struggle takes varied forms, one of them being the collection of information — or, bluntly, espionage. It is for this purpose that American taxpayers appropriate hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the Central Intelligence Agency and possibly larger amounts to military intelligence organizations.

A few years ago, the CIA was a high-priority target in this country of many Leftists, who said the United States should not soil its hands on dirty tricks against the Kremlin.

RECENTLY, DOMESTIC ATTACKS on the CIA have subsided, partly because of its discreet and effective director, Richard Helms, who has succeeded in disarming most congressional critics of CIA by informing them honestly and fully about his agency's findings and conclusions.

How about the other side?

As often happens in such matters, little has been said publicly in the United States about Russian espionage operations except for an occasional brief headline when the FBI catches a Soviet agent in the act.

Now the Senate Internal Security subcommittee has published a priceless tool for any American with a serious interest in Soviet intelligence and security operations.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE BOOK is a 289-page list and summary of published materials about achievements of Soviet intelligence agencies. The notable aspect of all this is that most of the materials were published in and by the Soviet itself, in books, magazines, and newspapers.

Until eight years ago, the Russians maintained their traditional policy of silence about their espionage activities. Premier Nikita Khrushchev, for example, declared in 1962 that the Soviet was not engaging in espionage because it did not intend to attack anyone and therefore did not need such information.

But on Sept. 4, 1964, the Senate study states, "the Soviet Union did a dramatic reversal, and since then there has been a spate of articles and books extolling the Soviet intelligence and security services and creating a new pantheon of heroes—the staunch protectors of the fledgling Communist regime of the 1918-1921 period and the intrepid intelligence operatives spying abroad during the inter-war period at great personal sacrifice and danger for the Soviet fatherland."

THE FIRST OF THE NEW heroes was Richard Sorge, who spied brilliantly for the Soviet in Tokyo just before and during World War II. He was discovered, tortured, and executed by the Japanese in 1944.

Once the publicity barrier was down, many other spies were deified. Rudolf Abel, who was convicted in New York in 1957 and later sent back to Moscow in a prisoner exchange, was glorified as another Sorge by the KGB, the Soviet security service.

"The admission to the Soviet people that the KGB — long portrayed to them as an internal, defensive arm of the state — does in fact engage in peacetime spying abroad was even more dramatic than the revelations of the activities of military intelligence," The Senate study said.

Some of the Soviet books and articles are available in English translation from the Commerce Department's Joint Publications Research Service here. Even the brief descriptions in the Senate compilation provide a rare glimpse into an obscure side of the all too real world.

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